



Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts Long-Range Interpretive Plan

November 2011



Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts Long-Range Interpretive Plan

November 2011

Prepared by
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts
National Capital Region
Harpers Ferry Center
Interpretive Planning

Plan Highlights

During the next seven to ten years Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts interpretive services will provide visitors with opportunities to increase their understanding and appreciation for the park and its resources; to engage in local educational opportunities; and to experience high quality performing arts.

To provide an active, engaging interpretive program, park staff and partners will work together focused on the following goals:

- Provide High Quality Performing Arts Experiences
- Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience
- Increase the Number and Variety of Interpretive Programs
- Expand the Curriculum-based Education Program
- Establish a Visitor Contact Station
- Increase Use of Interpretive Media
- Develop and Promote Natural Resources Program Interpretation
- Improve the Volunteer Program
- Engage, Educate, and Employ Youth
- Improve Partnerships

The Planning Process

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan outlines recommendations for future interpretive services, facilities, and media. Park staff, regional office staff, partners, and stakeholders worked together to develop a comprehensive tool that will outline educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to develop intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources found within Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts. Our goal is to promote Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts' resource values through specially planned visitor experiences and excellence in interpretation.

This Long-Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) recommends actions that should occur over the next seven to ten years. It identifies park themes, describes visitor experience goals, and recommends a wide variety of personal and non-personal interpretive services and outreach activities that will best communicate the park purpose, significance and themes. Developed in concert with the park's Annual Implementation Plan and Interpretive Database, it completes the Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for the park, as established in Director's Order 6. In addition, this planning process has been customized to meet the needs for Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, as well as the conditions and special circumstances that exist there. The ultimate product is a cost-effective, tightly focused, high quality park interpretive program that achieves management goals, provides appropriate visitor opportunities, and facilitates desired visitor experiences.

The Project Agreement was signed in May 2010. An open house meeting was held before the Foundation workshop to gather ideas from staff, partners, and stakeholders who could not attend the workshop. Four people attended the open house. A workshop was held on May 25, 2010 to review and revise the Park Purpose, Significance Statements, and Interpretive Themes. The Foundation workshop was held May 26, 2010 with 24 participants and the Recommendation workshop was held October 19 and 20, 2010, with 18 participants representing park staff, regional office staff, partners, educators, volunteers, local community members, and the Wolf Trap Foundation. The Implementation workshop was held December 1, 2010 with 10 participants, primarily park staff, determining the interpretive priorities and associated actions.

Barring legislative changes or major new revelations, the foundational elements expressed in this LRIP – purpose, significance, themes, and visitor experience goals – will remain constant over the life of the plan. Specific recommendations about media and programs may need to be updated as staffing, funding, technology, or resource conditions change. Further design documents must be produced to implement some of the goals and recommendations in this plan.

Table of Contents

Foundation for Planning

Site Background	1
Enabling Legislation	1
Park Significance	2
Interpretive Themes	4
Management Goals	5
Desired Visitor Experiences	6
Park Visitors	7
Issues and Challenges Affecting Interpretation	8

Existing Conditions

Information and Orientation	11
Park Facilities and Areas	11
Interpretive Media	14
Interpretive Media Assets	15
Personal Services	16
Partnerships	18

Recommendations

Goals for Interpretive Programming	21
Research and Evaluation Needs	30
Staffing and Training Needs	31
Implementation Plan	32

Appendices

Appendix A: The Planning Team	37
Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines	38
Appendix C: Interpretive Themes and Stories	38

Foundation for Planning



Site Background

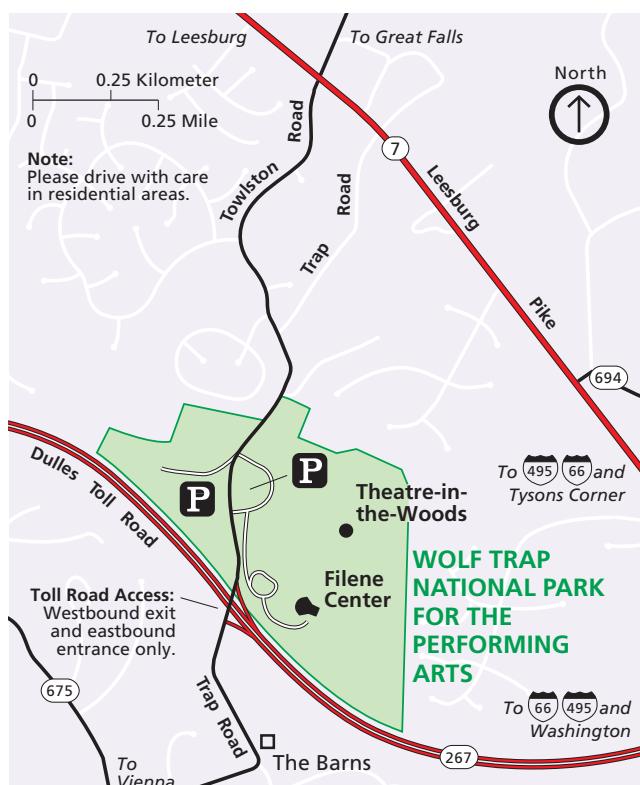
Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts is the only national park established solely for the performing arts. Wolf Trap also has a distinctive management arrangement. By legislative directive, the park is co-managed by the National Park Service and the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. The NPS cares for the 118-acre park, provides interpretive and educational programs, and directs the operation and maintenance of the technical equipment and backstage facilities that serve the performing artists. The Foundation, a private not-for-profit corporation, is responsible for the artistic programming, tickets, public relations, and marketing at the 7,000-seat (including the lawn) Filene Center, and the 800-seat Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods.

Enabling Legislation

Each unit of the National Park System is created by Congress and the President of the United States. All park planning flows from the mission articulated in the park's enabling legislation. The enabling legislation is the specific piece of legislation through which Congress created the park and declared its intent for the park. Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts' interpretive services and program must support this mission and help the public understand the significance of the park.

Public Law 89-671 (80 Stat. 950), dated October 15, 1966, authorized the establishment of Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts "...for the purpose of establishing in the National Capital area a park for the performing arts and related educational programs and recreation use in connection therewith..."

On August 21, 2002, Public Law 107-219 officially changed the park's name from Wolf Trap Farm Park to Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.



Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

Mission, Purpose and Significance

National Park Service Mission

A mission statement is a vision for the future and articulates, in broad terms, the ideas that the NPS strives to achieve.

The National Park Service mission is to preserve unimpaired natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.



The Filene Center is recognized as a world-class performance venue.

Park Purpose

Park purpose statements describe why an area was set aside and what specific purposes exist for a park, and are derived from legislation, legislative history, public participation, and public rule making.

2010 LRIP Foundation workshop participants used the 1997 General Management Plan and 2006 LRIP Foundation workshop purpose statements to draft the following:

- Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts is a park for the performing arts providing opportunities for related educational programs and recreational use.
- Wolf Trap provides exposure to the history and ideas behind the performing arts and artists.
- Wolf Trap provides opportunities to experience a tranquil and natural environment as a backdrop to the performing arts.
- Wolf Trap provides opportunities to experience live performances of a wide range of performing arts.

Park Significance

Statements of significance describe a National Park System unit's distinctive natural, cultural, and recreational resources and values that are the factual rationale for national recognition of the site.

2010 LRIP Foundation workshop participants used the 1997 General Management Plan and 2006 LRIP Foundation workshop statements to draft the following:

- Wolf Trap is the only National Park for the performing arts and celebrates that part of our culture.
- Wolf Trap is an urban oasis, achieving Mrs. Shouse's vision of connecting visitors to nature and the performing arts.
- Wolf Trap provides leadership in the field of performing arts and has a national and international reputation for high quality performances and as a premier performance facility.

The Filene Center is recognized as a world-class performance venue.

- Wolf Trap is a public venue that makes performing arts accessible and affordable.
- Wolf Trap offers several performing arts venues, including the world-renowned Filene Center, which can technically and logistically support a diversity of high-quality live programs.
- Wolf Trap is the first legislatively-mandated public/private management partnership in the NPS.
- Wolf Trap is a leading example of how preservation and persistence injects new life into the performing arts.

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes capture the essence of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts significance. They include the most important stories and represent core messages that every visitor – actual and virtual – should have the opportunity to experience.

While interpretation of any site could touch upon many stories, focused themes increase effectiveness. When well conceived, themes explore the meanings behind the facts. They open minds to new ideas and perhaps to multiple points of view. When linked to commonly held emotions or universal human

experiences, themes encourage visitors to see themselves in Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts' stories and discover personal relevance.

Two different teams of park staff members worked to develop these themes and associated stories. One team met in May and one in August 2010. The 1997 General Management Plan and the 2006 draft Foundation Statement were used to guide the theme development process. Appendix C lists all of the stories associated with each theme.

Health of the Performing Arts

The health of the performing arts depends on an understanding of them and opportunities to experience them.

People and the Performing Arts

The story of a performance starts well before show time and its effects can last long after the final bows.

History

By providing the land to make the park and the funds to build a performance venue to the National Park Service, Catherine Filene Shouse gave a gift to the American people, ensuring her vision and legacy lives on.

Location

Exploring the location of Wolf Trap reveals a natural area protected by the National Park Service, a glimpse into a former Virginia farm, and provides perspective on urban development in the greater National Capital area.

Catherine Filene Shouse donated the land and the funding to establish Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.



Management Goals

2008-2012 Strategic Plans:

In accordance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993, Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts developed a strategic plan and management goals through 2012. The following goals address recreation, interpretation, and visitor experiences.

The outcomes or how well the park is achieving its visitor-related goals are measured annually at every unit of the National Park System through survey forms that are distributed to visitors at each NPS unit. Visitors send their completed survey forms to the University of Idaho where the data is collected and compiled for each NPS unit. The survey results reflect visitor opinion about each park's facilities, services and recreational opportunities, as well as measures visitor understanding and appreciation of each NPS unit's significance.

Mission Goal IIa1:

By September 30, 2012, 98% of visitors to Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts are satisfied with appropriate park facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

The actual percentages for visitor satisfaction (2008 – 100%, 2009 – 100%, 2010 – 100%, 2011 – not available) exceed projections for service and satisfaction.

Mission Goal IIb1:

By September 30, 2012, 70% of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts visitors understand the significance of the park.

The actual percentages (2008 – 68%, 2009 – 0%, 2010 – 79%, 2011 – 0%) for visitor understanding are inconsistent because few visitors responded to the question in 2009 and in 2011.



Recent surveys indicate a 100% visitor satisfaction rating for Wolf Trap's facilities, services, and recreational opportunities.

Desired Visitor Experiences

Desired visitor experiences describe what physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences should be available for visitors to Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts. These experiences will be available to the degree possible to visitors of all abilities, including those with visual, auditory, mobility, or cognitive impairments.

During the May 2010 workshop, participants brainstormed this list of desired visitor experiences. The list was vetted at the conclusion of the September 2010 recommendations workshop.

Visitors to Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts will be able to:

- Attend a variety of affordable, accessible, and high-quality professional performances.
- Discover the history of the park, the Northern Virginia area, how the park got its name, and what Wolf Trap was like after Mrs. Shouse bought it and before roads bisected the land.
- Enter a welcoming visitor center featuring exhibits about the park's history, resources, and performing arts.
- Go online and experience the world of Wolf Trap through interactive features that might include playing a role in a Theatre-in-the-Woods production, performing at the Filene Center, seeing a puppeteer, or watching a performance.
- Attend a variety of interpretive programming that reveal the cultural and natural history of Wolf Trap including a detailed technical backstage tour of the Filene Center, more frequent Pre-Performance Discussions, a guided walk through the natural environment with a naturalist, and a demonstration of stage makeup techniques.
- Enjoy and/or perform live impromptu performances in the park.
- Attend cultural festivals.
- Discover year-round why Wolf Trap is a National Park for the Performing Arts.
- Experience an evening with friends and family while enjoying a picnic and a great performance.
- Purchase souvenirs year-round—not just during performances.
- Enjoy the natural environment of Wolf Trap.
- Experience the park in all seasons and times of day.
- Receive an orientation to the park and park resources.
- Access orientation materials that provides opportunities to explore the park independently.
- Discover the beautiful and sustainable gardens of Wolf Trap and learn how to create them at home.
- Join friends and families for picnics and family reunions in the meadow.
- Enjoy a visit in an accessible, safe, and friendly park.
- Make a difference in the community by volunteering at the park.
- Engage in children's activities including performing on stage and playing different musical instruments.

Park Visitors

This is a broad description of park visitors and their needs – including current and potential visitors. “Visitor” describes anyone who uses a park’s interpretation and education services whether in person or “virtually” through digital technologies.

Approximately 500,000 visitors come to Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts annually. This figure is based on a five-year average of monthly public use data taken during calendar years 2006-2010. There was a 10% increase in visitation from 2009 (466,752) to 2010 (520,397).

The majority of performances are held in the summer making June, July, and August the peak visitation months with over 120,000 visitors per month. Depending on the number of performances scheduled, May and September may have 30,000-50,000 visitors. There is a visitation spike in December due to the holiday concert. School groups raise visitation in March, April, and October. January, February, and November visitation statistics usually average 500 visitors each month.

During the May 2010 Foundation workshop, the following groups were identified as currently visiting Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts based on particular interests and needs.

- Active recreation – birders, anglers, dog walkers, sledders, skateboarders, runners, and walkers
- Donors
- Artistic
- Neighborhood
- Performance – performers and audience
- Education

- NPS enthusiast
- Business
- Community service
- First amendment
- Virtual visitors

During the lifetime of this Long-Range Interpretive Plan, the park may focus on providing interpretive services to specific visitor groups including, but not limited to:

- Senior community including Elderhostel groups and retirees
- Middle school, high school, and college students
- High school service learning projects
- Scouts
- Civic groups including garden clubs and women’s groups
- Informal and amateur performers
- Community theater groups



Snow does not deter visitors from sitting on the Filene Center lawn to enjoy the December Holiday Sing Along.

Issues and Challenges Affecting Interpretation

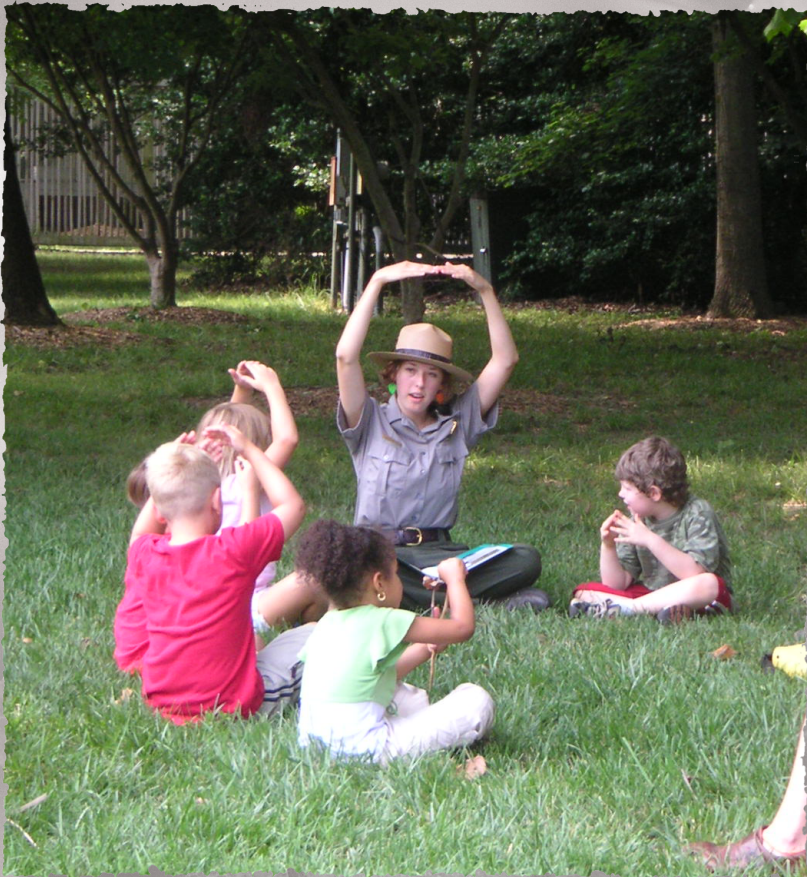
Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts has many assets upon which to build an effective interpretive program, including evocative and compelling stories, outstanding natural and cultural resources, ongoing research, and dedicated staff and supporters. It also faces a number of challenges. Well-designed programs can build on interpretive strengths to help overcome these challenges.

- A new metro station is scheduled to be open in 2013. Currently, the closest Metro Stations are Vienna and West Falls Church. Shuttle service is provided during Filene Center performances only from the West Falls Church station. A closer metro station may potentially mean service could be available throughout the day, to include the Theatre-in-the-Woods performance season and even outside the performance season. Perhaps the Fairfax Connector system could provide service.
- Groundbreaking for a new pedestrian bridge across the Dulles Toll Road will take place in November 2011. The park is exploring possible sidewalk improvements. These projects will connect multiple walking and biking paths to the park including Shouse Village and other nearby housing areas.
- Tyson's Corner growth will possibly change community demographics as more single people and baby boomers move into the area. Interpretive services will need to be developed to increase the opportunities for these visitor groups to become park stewards.
- Copyright laws must be obeyed when performances are recorded.
- The park joined the Climate Friendly Parks program in 2008. In FY2011, the park will complete the program's recertification process. Reducing the carbon footprint of the park is imperative.
- 2016 NPS Centennial and 50th Anniversary of the park will both occur in 2016. The park needs to plan early for to provide appropriate activities. These special events may divert staff and funding from regularly scheduled programming and services.
- The park has completed all of the development options outlined in the 1997 General Management Plan. In FY2012, the park will begin work on two new planning projects that are being funded by the National Capital Region: a Foundation Statement and a Historic Resources Report.



Future local population growth and more transportation options will provide opportunities for new audiences to experience the performing arts at Wolf Trap.

Existing Conditions



The following is a brief and generalized description of visitor experiences and interpretive services that existed in FY2011. The purpose of this section is to provide a baseline assessment that can help to justify some of the plan's proposed actions.

Information and Orientation

Marketing

The park informs the public of NPS-sponsored events and special programs through public service announcements posted on the park website, the park's lighted marquee, and the Meadow Kiosk as well as sent to area newspapers.

The Wolf Trap Foundation provides marketing and promotional materials related to performances and event programming.

The park receives information requests on a daily basis via letters, phone calls, and e-mail messages. Most requests are for basic information about the park and/or directions to the park. Brochure requests are decreasing, as the park website becomes more popular. There are also hundreds of volunteer requests and inquiries via phone calls, e-mail, and in person.

Website and Social Media

The park website (www.nps.gov/wotr) is a very popular way to gain information about the park. Virtual visitors access the website to learn about the park's cultural and natural history. The park recognizes the importance of the website as a tool to reach "armchair" visitors, long distance researchers, and as a pre-visit information opportunity. Interpretive staff members work continually to upgrade the website. There is an abundance of volunteer information, job information, and natural resource descriptions. There is almost no information about the cultural resources of the park including Mrs. Shouse's farm and legacy, Filene Center, or early park history.

In May 2011, the park established Facebook and Twitter accounts. Links to both are promoted on the park's primary webpage. Wolf Trap uses its social networking sites to promote a variety of information, including park-specific educational and interpretive programs, special events, performance, inclement weather, and cancellation information, and volunteer and summer job recruitment. The park and the Foundation will work together to avoid duplicative postings.

Wolf Trap Foundation - www.wolftrap.org

The website has performance and event schedules, ticket sales, fundraising information, a member only section, digital and social media links, calendar of events, press releases, and more related to Foundation activities. The digital and social media section offers visitors many opportunities to see and hear recent and past performances. Links to Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, an internet radio site, two blogs (insider/updates and Wolf Trap Opera), podcasts, and online store provide access to free media as well as sales items.

Traveler Information System (TIS)

The system is used primarily for traffic information during performance season.

Park Facilities and Areas

The FY2011 Servicewide Interpretive Report indicates that 50,000 visitors were contacted at three different facilities. The facilities are the Meadow and Main Entrance Information Kiosks and the Ranger Station. The kiosks are only staffed during a performance. The Ranger Station currently provides park brochures and the Eastern National passport stamp. There is no dedicated space in the kiosks or the Ranger Station for interpretive exhibits.



7,000 seat Filene Center

Filene Center

The 7,000 seat indoor/outdoor theater hosts an average of 90 performances each year. Performance season is the end of May through September. The Wolf Trap Opera Company, the National Symphony Orchestra, Broadway shows, dance companies, musicians, and more perform each year. The technical capabilities of the Filene Center support a diversity of programmatic opportunities. Patrons may sit inside the theater or bring a picnic and sit on the lawn to enjoy the performances.

NPS staff offer backstage tours and education programs October through April.

Main Gate of the Filene Center

The majority of Filene Center patrons pass through the main gate. During Filene Center performances, food concessions and the gift shop are open. During performance season, the box office is open. Restrooms are available year-round. Volunteers staff an information kiosk outside of the main entrance during Filene Center performances. This is the only NPS orientation and information station in the park. A proposed visitor contact station and exhibit area was not constructed

when the main entrance was renovated. Display cases that are maintained by the Wolf Trap Foundation feature posters of upcoming events and activities. Limited information is provided about NPS-sponsored events.

Meadow Pavilion

Located between the Filene Center and the Theatre-in-the-Woods, the pavilion is used during the summer for after performance workshops and intermittently in the fall and spring for education programs such as the "Physics of the Theater."

Theatre-in-the-Woods

The theater features a rustic wooden stage with wood benches that seats 800 people. The natural setting creates a shaded canopy for the patrons attending the summer performances. The theater is used during the summer for children's theater performances and intermittently in the fall and spring for education programs. An information kiosk located in the meadow near the Meadow Pavilion and footbridge provides box operations, food service, and artist merchandise sales during the Theatre-in-the-Woods performances. The kiosk serves as a meeting location for post-performance interpretive programs and Junior Ranger Day activities.

Interpretation Office Trailer

Trailer is within walking distance, but not easily accessible to any of the interpretive venues. Chief of Interpretation, Volunteer Coordinator, Lead Park Guide, interpretive staff, Youth Conservation Corps participants, and youth interns compete for office, program preparation, and storage space. Up to ten volunteers check-in and check-out for daily work at the Theatre-in-the-Woods.

Ranger Station

Chief Ranger, visitor services staff, and volunteers share very limited space. Visitors are attracted to the building

because of its proximity to the main entrance and architectural style. The building is not intended to be used as a visitor center or contact station.

Old Farmhouse/Administration Building

The building is now used by administrative and management staff for offices. It was originally Mrs. Shouse's home. The lawn adjacent to the farmhouse is used for the Pre-Performance Discussion program.

Open-air restaurant (Ovations)

The restaurant is a concession operation managed by the Wolf Trap Foundation and is only open during the Filene Center performance season.

Ushers and Park Police Trailers

Located between the main entrance and the Filene Center, volunteer usher staff, and Park Police staff are based in these trailers during the Filene Center performance season. Almost 120 volunteer ushers check-in and check-out each evening.

Terrace and Associates Deck

These two decks are rented out by the Wolf Trap Foundation during performance season. The park works with the Wolf Trap Foundation to use this space (if available) as a rain location for Pre-Performance Discussions.

Encore Circle

Located near the Ranger Station and the Old Farmhouse, during performance season this area is designated for Wolf Trap Foundation members use only.

Picnic Areas

Picnic tables are located in the west parking lot, the top and bottom of the meadow, near the vehicle gate at Lot 4, and around the barn area.

Meadow

The meadow is one area where visitors engage in a range of recreational activities at Wolf Trap. They may picnic in the summer and sled in the winter. Visitors may also go to other areas within the park, take a walk in the woods, or fish in the pond.

Box Office Trailer

Located across from the usher and Park Police trailers on Stage Road; Foundation employees are based in these trailers during the Filene Center performance season.

Park Gardens

During the summer 2011, three vegetable gardens were planted: the Founders Garden, the Sustainable Garden, both located outside of the Main Gate, and the Meadow Garden, located in the lower meadow adjacent to the Theatre-in-the-Woods. Interpretation and the General Maintenance and Grounds staff members are working together to identify the most appropriate interpretive techniques to promote and encourage sustainable gardening, a topic that is associated with the Location theme.

The meadow is a popular picnic spot.



Interpretive Media

Audiovisual Presentations

The park does not currently have a venue to present audiovisual presentations. The Wolf Trap Foundation offers podcasts, streaming video, and internet radio opportunities for visitors to experience recent and past performances. They also offer opportunities to hear the music of artists who will be performing at the Filene Center to entice visitors to attend the performance.

Publications

Official Park Map and Guide (2010) – Map is very small and does not reveal all of the opportunities for visitors to explore the park. Primary feature is a large image of a Filene Center performance.

Self-Guided Tour (no date) – Five-stop tour that describes the history of the park and its features. Primarily provides information about the venue at each stop.

Rack Card:

Go Green (no date) – Climate Friendly Parks initiative information and suggestions.

Become a Volunteer (no date) – recruitment tool describing volunteer opportunities.

Information Sheet:

Education Programs (no date) – Program description of education programs and instructions on how to arrange a field trip or classroom visit.

Newsletter:

Volunteer Newsletter – multi-page full-color newsletter published biannually highlights volunteer news and activities.

Signs

While the park does not have a master sign plan, a sign survey was started in October 2011. Accurate and appropriately located signs are critically important. There is potential for visitors to be confused when trying to find the park because the Wolf Trap Foundation directional signs are very similar to NPS signs.

There are display cases at the main entrance to Filene Center that are maintained by the Wolf Trap Foundation. The park does not have bulletin boards to post changeable materials.

The lighted marquee located on Trap Road adjacent to the park's entrance is updated and maintained by the Wolf Trap Foundation during performance season and by park staff during the non-performance season. Upcoming performances are advertised in the spring and summer, and interpretive programs/events are posted in the winter. Although an electronic marquee, it is only used during daylight hours during the non-performance season.

Wayside Exhibits

The park has two wayside exhibits. The titles emphasize natural features found within the park: the forests and Wolf Trap Run. The text and photos



A split rail fence blocks visitor access to the Wolf Trap Run wayside exhibit.

emphasize Mrs. Shouse's legacy, the geographic location of Wolf Trap, and the story behind the name Wolf Trap. There is little description or detail regarding the forest and the stream. The exhibit panels are located on either side of the footbridge going to the Theatre-in-the-Woods, and positioned so that they are difficult to access and read. The panel on the east side of the bridge is blocked by a split rail fence.

Exhibits

The park does not currently have a venue to display exhibits.

Junior Ranger

During FY2011, more than 500 children participated in the Junior Ranger program. 460 Junior Rangers used the traditional activity book and 74 children became Junior Rangers during three special Junior Ranger Day events and the Let's Move with Music at Wolf Trap! program. The Junior Ranger Day 3-hour programs are designed for children ages 5-12 and feature activity books, a scavenger hunt, and ranger-led activities.

An early elementary booklet and a late elementary booklet (both revised June 2008) are available. Children must complete at least seven of nine activities to receive a Junior Ranger patch. Matching, fill-in-the-blank, mazes, dot-to-dot, and other age appropriate activities enhance on-site experiences and reinforce the park's role as an NPS unit and a performing arts venue.

Interpretive Media Assets

Media assets include other park resources available to interpretation that support the design of personal services programs or interpretive media.

Artifact Collection

A catalog of performances is maintained by the Wolf Trap Foundation.



A Girl Scout troop working hard to become Junior Rangers.

Art Work

Mosaic murals, constructed with non-durable materials, in Trap Road tunnel created by local elementary school children.

Park Library

Student interns spent the summer 2010 and 2011, cataloging resources in the park and at the Wolf Trap Foundation. Resources were cataloged by location, including boxes at the administration building, interpretive offices, and lower stage door. Once the archival cataloging is completed interpretive staff will be able to use these resources to develop interpretive programs and services about Mrs. Shouse, her legacy, the Filene Center, and the early history of Wolf Trap. There are also oral histories of Mrs. Shouse and Ralph Hoffman, first Chief of Performing Arts division in the library.

A mosaic mural created by local school children highlights the global impact of the performing arts.





Staffing challenges limit the number of students that Wolf Trap can reach each year.

There are slide files stored in the Interpretive Offices. Slides were scanned electronically in 2010 and are saved on the park's shared drive.

Personal Services

Education

According to the park's education handout, programs are limited to 20-35 students and chaperones. The group size is limited because there are only two rangers available to present the program during the non-performance season.

The park has developed a relationship with nearby Colvin Run and Wolf Trap Elementary Schools. Partnerships were developed originally for mural art work

Let's Move with Music at Wolf Trap! had everybody dancing.



in the tunnel and expanded to include creating and providing education programming and promoting interpretive programming at the schools.

The park offers the following programs to all educational institutions:

Grades 1-12 and College

- Backstage Tour – one hour – topics: performer experience and theater operations (October-April)
- Park Tour – 1 ½ hours – pre-park history and Mrs. Shouse (October-April with backstage tour and April-September without)

Grades pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 1 (March – November)

- Park Introduction – 30 minutes

Grades 2-3 (October – June)

- Physics of the Theater – 1 ½ hours – Connects to Virginia third-grade curriculum “The Physics of Toys.” Students engage in a hands-on activity to become stagehands and use simple machines.

Grades 5-6 (year round)

- Technology of Sound – 45 minutes – sound system technology.

During 2011, Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts became an official partner of the Alice Ferguson Foundation and the Bridging the Watershed program. Programs will be offered October through November and March through May.

Special Events

During 2011, three special events were held: the Summer Blast Off concert and fireworks, the *Let's Move with Music at Wolf Trap!* family event, and the Holiday Sing-a-long/candlelight recessional.

The International Children's Festival (ICF) was presented for 40 years

at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts. Co-sponsored with the Arts Council of Fairfax County, Virginia, the ICF evolved from a four-day event targeted to fifth grade students to a two-day public weekend festival which offered performances on multiple stages throughout the park as well as arts and crafts.

In September 2011, the park offered a new one-day, four-hour event: *Let's Move with Music at Wolf Trap!* This new program upheld the 40-year legacy of the ICF as well as Mrs. Shouse's vision to provide children with opportunities to experience a global culture of performing arts. Diverse cultural and ethnic performances as well as interactive stations for children and families were offered. The program also acknowledged the Presidential *Let's Move Outside* initiative, as well as National Public Lands Day. Originally scheduled to be held in the meadow, weather conditions forced the event onto the deck at the Ovations restaurant.

Personal Services Programs

Backstage Tours – Offered on select weekend days October through April. Tours last one hour and a maximum of 35 people may go on each tour. Statistics for FY2011 are not available. During FY2010, 28 tours were presented to 485 people. Group size is limited due to the size of the dressing rooms and “Green Room.”

Interactive Workshops – The 10:00 a.m. Theatre-in-the-Woods artists conduct 30-45-minute workshops, for children ages five and older (up to sixth grade), on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday at the Meadow Pavilion after performances. Per the artists' request workshops are limited to 30 participants. During FY2011, ten workshops were presented to 88 people.

Performing Arts Ranger Talks – Offered at 12:15 p.m. and 12:30 p.m. daily and last approximately 20-30 minutes during the Theatre-in-the-Woods season



(mid-June through early August). Programs are recommended for children ages five and older. Programs are cancelled if it rains or if there is a “Code Red” air quality alert. Topics are the ranger's choice. During FY2010, 26 programs were presented to 289 people and featured the following topics:

Rangers take visitors backstage at the Filene Center.

- In Disguise: How Costumes Make a Character – character development using costume and makeup
- Puppet Pals – history of puppetry, make a puppet, stage a show
- A Greek Play in a New Way – origins of Greek theater; compare Greek theater to modern theater by putting on a play
- The Power of Recycling – learn about recycling and how to recycle
- Music Makers – different ways to make music and tell stories



Interpretive programs are primarily presented during the summer following the Theatre-in-the-Woods performances.

- The Power of One: A Park's History – program about Mrs. Shouse and her legacy
- Behind the Scenes: A Backstage Tour – behind the scenes at Theatre-in-the-Woods

Pre-Performance Discussions – Program offered one hour before show time on the Old Farmhouse lawn. Featured speakers discuss that evening's scheduled event such as a selected film, Wolf Trap Opera performance, or National Symphony Orchestra performance. During FY2011, nine programs were presented to 792 people.

Informal Interpretation – During performance season Volunteer Roaming Interpreters rove around the meadow and Filene Center main gate.

Performances

Filene Center

During the FY2011 performance season, 176 performances were attended by 401,764 people. Two National Symphony Orchestra Open Rehearsals were offered during FY2011 and attended by 472 people.

Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods

Performances are offered mid- to late-June through early to mid-August Tuesdays through Saturdays at 10:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. Seventy 45-minute shows for grades kindergarten through sixth grade featuring family-friendly music, dance, storytelling, theater, and puppetry are scheduled. Tickets are \$8.00 for one show or \$10 for both shows on the same day. During FY2011, 70 performances were planned however 4 were cancelled due to inclement weather. As a result, 66 performances were attended by 43,679 people. NPS staff provides a welcome and 5-minute introduction including safety, park regulations, and activity announcements before the show begins.

Staffing

The park has a Division of Visitor Services, Resource Management and Interpretation that is managed by the GS-025-12 Chief Ranger. Interpretation staff includes the GS-025-9 Chief of Interpretation, one GS-090-5 subject-to-furlough Lead Park Guide, one GS-301-7 subject-to-furlough Volunteer Coordinator, one seasonal GS-1054-5 Theater Specialist, and three GS-090-4 seasonal Park Guides.

During performance season, the division staff is divided into two shifts. The interpretive staff works primarily during the day to provide services related to the Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods programs. The rest of the division works at night providing support for Filene Center performances and patrons. Volunteers provide informal interpretation during the Filene Center performances.

Partnerships

Partners

The Wolf Trap Foundation is a non-profit organization that creates and

selects performance programming; develops and presents education programs; manages ticket sales, marketing, publicity, and public relations; and raises funds to support the programs. The Foundation's Education Department works with Wolf Trap interpretive staff to coordinate Theatre-in-the-Woods operations.

Gift Shop - Wolf Trap Foundation

Sales areas are located at the main entrance to the Filene Center and are only open during performances. During Theatre-in-the-Woods performance season, merchandise is also sold at the meadow kiosk. The park does not have a Scope of Sales because the sales are not governed by Director's Order 32 on Cooperating Associations.

Volunteer Program

Approximately 1,500 volunteers fill a variety of roles during performances:

- Kiosk and Roaming Interpreters rove the meadow, staff box office gazebo, and special events areas to provide informal interpretation, visitor information, and assistance.
- Ushers assist patrons attending shows at the Filene Center.
- Rangers greet patrons, drive carts, and staff information kiosk.
- Children's Theatre-in-the-Woods volunteers set up and break down stage equipment, staff information kiosk, assist patrons at the children's theatre by scanning tickets, greeting patrons, and seating patrons.
- Stage Door volunteers support the stage door staff by providing customer service for the performing artists, the public, stagehands, the NPS Production Office, and the Wolf Trap Foundation Programming and Production Office; security before, during, and after a performance.

Youth Conservation Corps

During FY2011, the park hired fourteen Youth Conservation Corps students. There were two work crews – one crew worked with the interpretation division and one crew worked with the maintenance division. The interpretation crew had six members who provided set up and break down of sound equipment daily at Theatre-in-the-Woods; assisted with parking operations, scanning tickets, and directing patrons; cleaned the theatre stage and dressing rooms daily; assisted with special events; and provided trash removal along the streambed. Part of the work experience included training in NPS history, attending guest speaker programs, and going on three field trips to other NPS units. This crew collaborated with the maintenance crew on large maintenance projects.

Volunteers assist young visitors at the meadow information kiosk.



Recommendations



Interpretive planning assesses current conditions and formulates recommendations that will provide direction and focus to achieve the desired future interpretive program. An interpretive plan analyzes all needs and recommends a wide array of interpretive services, facilities, programs, and opportunities for partnerships to communicate the center's purpose and significance in the most efficient and effective way.

The Goals for Interpretive Programming are designed to realize the vision, objectives, themes, and visitor experiences described in the Foundation for Planning section. The following principles will apply to all interpretation at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts:

- All interpretation will provide physical and programmatic accessibility.
- Where possible, interpretation will use reproduction objects and documented personal stories to bring the story alive for visitors.
- Where possible, Wolf Trap will partner with neighboring institutions to develop programs and media and share research.
- Wolf Trap will follow the standards of the National Park Service Graphic Identity Program as signs, brochures, and interpretive media are developed and upgraded.
- Interpretation will include examples and perspectives from diverse points of view. It will respond to diverse audiences, varying levels of interest, and different lengths of time for a visit.
- Where possible, "virtual visitors" will have opportunities to view key vistas and access to new research, studies, management plans, and historical information.

Goals for Interpretive Programming

Workshop participants identified goals to increase the effectiveness of the interpretive services at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts. These goals and associated actions are representative of many ideas generated during the workshop. Action items are listed below each goal, and were used to create the Implementation Plan located in the next section of this document. Over the next seven to ten years, Wolf Trap will focus on achieving the following goals:

Provide High Quality Performing Arts Experiences

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts has a commitment to work with the Wolf Trap Foundation to provide high quality live formal and informal performances. The park not only serves performance patrons, it also serves as a conduit to connect all visitors to the performing arts.

While supporting the 90-100 performances at the Filene Center presented each season, the park may attract audiences of different ages and cultures by expanding the performance season and enhancing the program-

In the future, visitors may have more opportunities to discover the performing arts traditions of other countries and cultures.



ming at Theatre-in-the-Woods and Meadow Pavilion. Recognizing that the performing arts are an effective form of interpretation, all performers will be encouraged to reveal more about their particular art during a rehearsal, performance, post-performance, or perhaps even a recorded message.

Opening up the park, especially during the off-season, to more informal or amateur performances may increase opportunities for visitors to experience a variety of performing arts and encourage them to become patrons or possibly performers. The Meadow Pavilion and Theatre-in-the-Woods could be used to host weekend afternoon concerts, local school performances, talent shows, spotlight showcases, or simply open for an impromptu jam session. In 2011, the park submitted a proposal to the University

Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience

An important goal for providing interpretive services over the next three to five years is to improve orientation and wayfinding. Before visitors can have a meaningful experience, they need to find their way to the site, determine where the experience begins, and take care of their basic needs. Visitor experience issues such as agency identity and orientation must be addressed before interpretation can begin. Effective signs as well as pedestrian orientation and information are the first steps toward satisfying these basic visitor needs.

A new park map that also shows related Wolf Trap Foundation locations could become the cornerstone of a comprehensive wayfinding system including detailed directional sign, wayside exhibit, and bulletin board plans. This system would help to define and improve the park and NPS identity as well as establishing a branding and marketing strategy that builds on the strengths of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts and the Wolf Trap Foundation. The Traveler Information System could be expanded to offer more visitor orientation and information.

Other forms of both social and digital media could be explored to offer more detailed orientation and arrival information including future programming, performer biographies, park rules, and regulations. In June 2011, the park posted its first performer biography on Facebook and Twitter featuring Kenneth Kellogg of the Wolf Trap Opera Company.

Increase the Number and Variety of Interpretive Programs

Interpreters are the best interactive tool in enabling visitors to experience, understand, appreciate, and make personal connections with the resource. A well-trained, knowledgeable, professional paid and volunteer



As the National Park for the Performing Arts, Wolf Trap interpretive programs should reflect a high degree of creativity and innovation.

of the District of Columbia Performing Arts department to host student performances.

Monthly cultural festivals held in the Meadows or live cultural performances and/or workshops would provide opportunities for visitors to discover the performing arts traditions of other cultures and countries.

staff will ensure sensitivity, accuracy and consistency. Wolf Trap's resources and themes present almost limitless opportunities for both standard and innovative interpretive activities.

As staffing levels permit, and in keeping within the parameters of the interpretive themes and visitor experience goals, Wolf Trap interpreters and volunteers should be given a high degree of creative freedom to explore and experiment with new programs and performances. These programs and performances could be presented at the Theatre-in-the-Woods, in the meadow, at the Meadow Pavilion, along Wolf Trap Run, and in the Filene Center. Programs will need to be developed recognizing the nature of different audiences depending on the season. For example, winter programming will be very different from summer programming. This will help to maintain a creative edge and attract new and returning audiences. Junior Ranger Day may be another opportunity to experiment with innovative children's programming.

Since personal services and interpretive programs are relatively easy to change, activities should be evaluated on a regular basis to discontinue those that are not effective, modify or improve those that require it, and validate those that are successful. Continuous individual and peer evaluation will ensure that factual, accurate, and timely answers to visitor questions are provided.

Suggestions for possible future programs include:

- Scout leadership and badge programs.
- Backstage program that demonstrates the capabilities of a particular venue and reveals the duties and responsibilities of the people involved in presenting a performance.
- Program about the first forms of storytelling that explains

how the technique has evolved and what might happen in the future.

- Stage motion program that features children and/or family members depicting a performance season using colorful clothing, backdrops, props, and body movements.
- Performing art appreciation program.
- Traditions in the theater program.
- Broad context of performing arts program that showcases a variety of cultures.
- National Park programs.
- Mood music.
- Interpretation through song.

Expand the Curriculum-based Education Program

An effective education program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. The resources and themes of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular education program in partnership with the Wolf Trap Foundation and area schools.

Currently, the education departments of the NPS and the Wolf Trap

Building on existing park education programs, Bridging the Watershed will encourage more students to discover the natural resources of Wolf Trap.



Foundation operate independently of each other. The park should develop a stronger working relationship with the Wolf Trap Foundation so that the education programs complement each other. In the future, the NPS would like all education programs from “Wolf Trap” to work together to provide the widest spectrum of choices to all. A one-page joint NPS/Wolf Trap Foundation brochure of education programs is being developed.

Once hired, an Education Specialist will work to secure resources to facilitate the development and growth of a curriculum-based program based on national education standards. With a strong program and ties directly to national curriculum standards, more schools will see the value of using the park to help meet their needs. One of the first duties of the education specialist would be to conduct an education needs assessment and then prepare an education plan that would provide overall direction for the education program. Next, establish an education advisory committee, using local area school and university teachers, to advise the park on the most useful ways to offer educational services to schools and to develop curriculum-based education programs.

Future curriculum-based programming will build upon the newly established relationship with the Alice Ferguson Foundation to offer Bridging the Watershed programs along Wolf Trap Run and wooded area beyond Theatre-in-the Woods; recruiting, hiring and training staff including seasonals, volunteers, Youth Conservation Corps, and Student Conservation Association Assistants to deliver curriculum-based education programs; establishing a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program to increase interpretive opportunities on-site and in the classroom; and conducting teacher workshops to enable teachers to participate in on-site curriculum-based programs. A partnership with Colvin Run Elementary School to hold

a curriculum development workshop may be helpful in the short-term. Other educational partnerships to consider for the future may include the University of the District of Columbia and the Duke Ellington School for the Performing Arts.

A variety of options will need to be explored to locate dedicated classroom space for curriculum-based education programs. Portability of these education programs will initially be the key to program success.

Specific recommendations for curriculum-based education programs:

- Expand “Physics of the Theater” to other grade levels and include the use of complex machines.
- Request help from science, music, and art teachers to improve “Technology of Sound.”
- Add more of the story of the theater from the point of view of theater technicians (stage hands, sound techs, and others)
- Develop a program, similar to one offered at Ford’s Theatre, where students can come on class trips to experience performing arts. Stations and stages are used to show different aspects of the performing arts.
- Create service learning projects that introduce underserved students to the performing arts and the National Park Service.
- Develop new curriculum-based programs for grades 7-12.

Establish a Visitor Contact Station

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts will establish a year-round visitor contact station that is within easy access to the performance venues, parking lots, and drop-off areas. The function of the contact station will be to orient visitors to the park and its resources, services, and attractions. Another purpose of the contact

station is to provide a human point of contact as well as a visual identity for the park. Temporary and possibly a few permanent interactive exhibits may be installed to interpret park stories.

The existing ranger station is considered to be the best site for the contact station. It is centrally located and interpretation and visitor services would work together in one building. In cooperation with the Wolf Trap Foundation and Eastern National, there may be space available for a year-round bookstore.

Possible exhibits and media at or near the visitor contact station include:

- An instrument/costume “petting zoo”.
- An interactive green screen that allows visitors to perform in a variety of venues and highlights a variety of performing arts.
- An exhibit that showcases “The Life and Contributions of Catherine Shouse”.
- An orientation film.

Increase Use of Interpretive Media

Park Website

Since Wolf Trap Farm Park was authorized in 1966 (name changed to Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts in 2002), significant changes in digital technology, in DOI/NPS web standards, and in social media have occurred. During the life of this plan, park staff will need to continually increase and improve their skills with the technology, monitor and update all web-based content to meet the current standard, and remain vigilant about what is posted via social media sites.

An ever-increasing percentage of visitors are web users who visit the park’s website (<http://www.nps.gov/wotr>) seeking information. Many of these “virtual visitors” never actually



come to the center, but have their needs met solely through the website. The website should highlight the opportunities and experiences that are available to both on-site visitors and virtual visitors.

The Ranger Station may become the new year-round visitor contact station.

An effective website requires adequate staff to maintain, update, and develop new content including trip planning information and interpretive media. A well-designed and maintained website generally depends on establishing a webmaster position or assigning the role as a collateral duty.

- Create and monitor links to partner programs and research.
- Create opportunities for visitors to share their experience on the performing arts through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Wayside Exhibits

Wayside exhibits would help to tell Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts stories on location. They “caption the landscape” and help visitors make direct connections with the park and its meanings. Wayside exhibits provide round-the-clock information and interpretation, and with appealing high quality

design, writing, and graphics, they can serve to instill and reinforce respect for important resources. In association with good graphics, waysides can show what a site looked like at different points in time. In addition, temporary waysides can be developed inexpensively to interpret special events, future construction, restoration, and preservation projects.

A wayside exhibit plan would ensure the fabrication and installation of a complete, high-quality, and unified system of wayside exhibit panels with a Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts identity. The plan would provide an in-depth assessment of all potential wayside exhibit sites as well as sites where panels would not be appropriate. It includes both informational and interpretive exhibits. The document also can set priorities to guide wayside development in phases as funding allows. The plan will describe the purpose of each wayside exhibit, identify graphics available for use, show thumbnail design concept drawings, and determine exact exhibit sizes, base styles, and locations. A detailed budget would also be part of the document.

Digital Media

Digital media is well suited to the presentation of chronological and sequential material. It can capture realism, provide emotional impact, and create a mood or atmosphere. Also it can reach many visitors at one time and may be included in exhibits or posted onto the Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts' website, in addition to being shown in dedicated spaces.

Digital media can reach the many visitors who are now using computers, smart phones, cell phones, Global Positioning System (GPS) units, MP3 players, and a variety of other technological systems for entertainment, information, orientation, and interpretation. In

response to the growing demand for these services, the park needs to include the use of portable "individualized" audio and/or audiovisual opportunities. Using new technology will possibly create opportunities for a more diverse audience to experience the performing arts than ever before. These services will allow visitors to access more meanings, information, and orientation at their convenience.

Once digital productions are created and made available, Wolf Trap staff must maintain, monitor, and update the programs. Local media outlets may be enlisted to air and/or print digital programs to expand the reach of interpretive opportunities related to the performing arts. Most digital programs can be posted on the park's website for visitors to access at their leisure.

Specific digital program recommendations include:

- A chronological slide show on "A Day in the Life of the Filene Center" showing what goes on at the loading dock, backstage, and on stage.
- A visual history of the park using historic images and aerial video and narration; start and end with finale of a performance.
- A virtual tour of the park.
- A database of performances including audio, video, photos and information for potential visitors.
- Oral histories of stagehands, key staff, performers, volunteers, and their experience being at and/or performing at the park.
- An interactive program that allows visitors to "Set the Stage".
- First-hand stories of the performers told by the performers, then by patrons, and how that performance changed or inspired them.

- A “Soundscape” audio piece
- A biography of Mrs. Shouse
- The Filene Center fire and rebuilding.

Social Media

Social media has the potential to become one of the most used components of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts interpretive program. While there are still restrictions on the use of certain forms of social media, there are opportunities to use a limited number of sites so that the park can benefit from the new communication applications that visitors may access to make decisions about what to do, where to go, and what services are worthwhile for their particular social group.

A strategy for social media use should be created to include how partners like the Wolf Trap Foundation are using social media and how to collaborate with them. The strategy will include how to best utilize social media as well as how to manage user-generated feedback.

Potential ideas to consider once the strategy is developed include:

- Establish a blog by an artist in residence, current performers or production staff that offers a daily or weekly description of Wolf Trap operations, performances, and productions.

Exhibits

Exhibits provide both two- and three-dimensional displays of informational and/or interpretive material that may include text, maps, images, models, replicas, artifacts, or interactive components. As the National Park for the Performing Arts, Wolf Trap has the opportunity to become a leader in showcasing non-traditional exhibits that connect to all of a visitor’s senses.

Possible exhibit ideas to consider include:



- Compile a complete listing of all “signed” brass plaques with pictures and artifacts showing some of the 40 years of artists who have performed at the Filene Center.
- Install “free notes”-large interactive percussion instruments-in the meadow.
- Develop, fabricate, and install models of Filene Centers 1 and 2 with specifications of each building.
- Develop a sculpture trail.
- Connect the “natural” forces of the park with the performing arts by featuring or highlighting the aspects of the park through the use of wooden acoustics and lawn seating.

A virtual tour would allow visitors to experience Wolf Trap at their convenience.

Publications

Visitors typically use publications in two ways: for information and orientation during their visit and for in-depth interpretation following their visit. The park’s size, access issues, and number of stories to tell make publications an effective method of interpretive delivery. Publications are a means for

getting information to diverse audiences through a variety of formats. The publications can also be posted on the park’s website for visitors to download either before or after their visit. Links to publications can be made on social media sites. Making the publications available using current technology such as QR codes and e-publications may be considered. All brochures, site bulletins, maps, rack cards, and other publications should meet the NPS graphic identity standards.

Specific recommendations include:

- Develop a trail guide that would connect to interpretive, recreational, and fitness opportunities around the park. The length of each trail should be identified on a map.
- Research, write, and produce publications on the following topics:
 - The importance of the performing arts, the forms of performing arts, and suggestions for how best to experience and support the arts.

- The capabilities of performing arts venues and the positions needed for a successful performance.
- The story of Mrs. Shouse.
- The Filene Center fire and rebuilding including fire science and safety.

Junior Ranger

Enhance the Junior Ranger program by offering badges in addition to patches when the booklet is completed.

Develop and Promote Natural Resources Program Interpretation

While recognizing that current interpretive services provide some connections to the natural resource, workshop participants felt that more could be done. For example, a greater emphasis could be placed on current practices, research, climate change, and indicator species. Master Gardener workshops, the Green Spot program, and Audubon Society-led bird walks could also be offered. Other sustainable resource projects that may be highlighted include using backyard composters and rainwater collection. To stimulate continued visitor interest, two or three specific areas of emphasis could be highlighted annually that reflect the importance of “going green.”

“Bridging the Watershed” programs are an effective way to engage high school students in the resource through curriculum-based education programs that include elements of citizen science. Rather than relying upon personal services for natural resources interpretation, different approaches such as the park website, temporary exhibits, digital media, and citizen science efforts will be used to strengthen opportunities for the visitor to learn about these stories and to explore the natural areas of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.



Citizen science projects as well as service learning projects will help protect Wolf Trap’s natural resources.

Improve Volunteer Program

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts already has a very strong volunteer program. With minimal interpretive staff, the park has always been heavily dependent on volunteer efforts in order to be successful. As appropriations become static or decrease due to stressful fiscal times, the importance of interpretation volunteers will continue to rise. In the future, the park will continue to look for ways to expand its volunteer efforts.

The Volunteer-in-Parks program could be enhanced with increased field supervision during work shifts, greater inter-divisional cooperation, and an increase in volunteer funding. A full-time, year-round volunteer coordinator would help to facilitate the retention of current volunteers as well as the development and growth of the program.

Specific recommendations include:

- Prepare a volunteer plan to guide the development and enhancement of the volunteer program including a recruitment strategy.
- Train current volunteers to provide “spontaneous” or informal interpretation in an effort to share park stories with a greater number of visitors.
- Explore potential opportunities for artists to serve volunteers including an artist-in-residence program.
- Encourage performance-season only volunteers to serve year-round so that off-season interpretive programming and performances could be offered.
- Recognize that volunteer coordination is a year-round responsibility.



Engage, Educate, and Employ Youth

An effective youth program requires adequate staff for planning, development, implementation, and assessment. In this planning document, youth programs are designed for pre-kindergarten through age 25. The resources and themes of Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts offer great potential for the development of dynamic and popular programs in collaboration with the Wolf Trap Foundation, area schools, and local communities.

Establishing a youth intake program, expanding the Youth Conservation Corps program, and hiring Student Conservation Assistants will increase opportunities for local young people to not only experience performing arts but to also become leaders in the performing arts community.

Improve Partnerships

Interpretive partnerships play a key role in the delivery of essential programs and can also provide opportunities for enhanced interpretive products and services. Partnerships are most effective when partners share a common goal and can leverage their efforts to accomplish the goal. Workshop participants recognized that the park

Increasing the number of interpretation volunteers is a park priority.

staff cannot and should not be the sole provider of interpretive services.

Future growth of interpretive partnerships is dependent upon establishing an partnership coordinator position. The duties and responsibilities of this position could be formalized within the Deputy Director's position description.

Working more closely with the Wolf Trap Foundation as well as other local, state, and federal agencies is imperative. Establishing a stronger, cooperative working relationship with the Wolf Trap Foundation will maximize interpretive programs and service; prevent duplication of efforts; and effectively utilize joint resources. Opportunities to strengthen the relationship may include establishing a joint internship program and offering interpretive training for park staff, Wolf Trap Foundation staff, volunteers, and performers.

There are opportunities to create new partnerships outside of the park and the Wolf Trap Foundation. A list of potential new partners should be created; a partnership assessment conducted; and then annual meetings should be established. Within the National Capital Region (NCR), Wolf Trap could take the lead to establish a partnership and idea sharing network with parks that have performing arts themes including Glen Echo, Rock Creek Park (Carter Barron Amphitheater and Fort Dupont), and the National Mall and Memorial Parks. NCR is developing a collaborated response to the National Park Service Call to Action Plan item (#10) "Arts Afire." The goal of the program is to combine resources and interpretive efforts with other parks in the National Capital Region to develop new, innovative arts- and performance-based interpretive programs.

Research and Evaluation Needs

All interpretive programs and services must be solidly grounded in research. In order to fully accomplish the actions included in this plan and support the interpretive themes, the park needs research on the following topics:

The park needs to do research in order to fully understand itself, its founder, and the park's place in NPS and performing arts history.

One of the pillars of the Interpretation and Education Renaissance is the "Culture of Evaluation." Evaluation also is important in the development of specific media and programs and will be planned as part of all substantial media projects and special programming. Front-end evaluation will inform the project team about what visitors already know about the site before they come, what understandings they may have about the significance of the site, or how to fulfill the visitor's interest in visiting the site. This type of evaluative study is targeted so that practical use can be made of the results. Formative evaluations allow the team to get feedback on project content before it is fabricated. Knowing how potential visitors react to stories and information or even how the message is displayed can inform and enhance the media product and the overall visitor experience. Summative evaluations are valuable in helping to determine the effectiveness of final media, facilities, and programs – i.e. whether the intended themes are being communicated, if people are actually making use of the information, or if visitor behavior is affected. Summative evaluation may even be a necessary follow-up for certain sources of funding such as foundation grants.

The park will be analyzing the results of a 2011 position management review was conducted and a 2010 "T-MAP" to make informed decisions about future interpretive programs and services.

Staffing and Training Needs

Currently there is one full-time year-round Interpretation employee (GS-025-9 Chief of Interpretation). In 2008, a full-time, subject-to-furlough GS-301-7 Volunteer Coordinator position was created using centennial funding. In 2009, an administrative position was abolished in order to create a full-time, subject-to-furlough GS-090-5 Lead Park Guide position. Because interpretation is built upon subject-to-furlough positions, there are times when the park is unable to provide programs and is understaffed. Currently summer seasonal interpretation staff is scheduled only during the day, so if interpretation programs are conducted in the evening, overtime is needed.

In order to fulfill the vision of this plan, additional funding and staffing will be required. To be most effective, interpretation should become a separate division from Visitor Services and Resources Management. In addition to the existing staff, new positions that have been identified include an Education Specialist, Partnership Coordinator, and a Webmaster. Until full-time positions can be established, the park may want to consider adding a GS-025-5/7/9 Park Ranger position. Education program and website management responsibilities could then be assigned to this position. With the addition of these positions and management of a separate division, consideration should be given to upgrading the Chief of Interpretation to a GS-025-11. The partnership coordinator needs may be resolved when the park fills the Deputy Director position. Funding requests will need to be submitted to acquire all of these positions. Some of these positions may be created immediately by reclassifying existing positions and others may be phased in as funding is approved and positions are vacated.

A trained and motivated workforce is necessary for any successful interpretive operation. Emphasis should be placed on accountability for interpretive standards to be applied or adhered to when any Wolf Trap employees or volunteers present interpretive programs, design publications, media, and exhibits, or present curriculum-based educational programs. Ensure that all staff members who provide interpretive services are held to the appropriate NPS standards as defined in the Interpretive Development Program and be trained accordingly.

Interpretive staff would also benefit from training in grant writing. Resource knowledge will increase if greater emphasis is placed on sharing of information and/or fun facts at all employee meetings.

Because volunteers are an important part of the workforce, interpretive staff members require an appropriate level of volunteer supervisory training.



A roving park ranger encourages a young visitor to become a Junior Ranger.

Implementation Plan

The measure of success of any plan is the extent to which it is implemented. Initial implementation of strategies needs to be both realistic and flexible. Because funding opportunities and priorities often change, management may need to adjust the implementation strategies to adapt to changing conditions. Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts and its partners should meet each year to draft an Annual Implementation Plan for each new fiscal year based on funding opportunities and coordination with other projects. Flexibility is extremely important to allow Wolf Trap staff and partners the opportunity to try new and different interpretive ideas and make adjustments as necessary.

During the 2010 Implementation workshop, the participants agreed to divide the actions necessary to implement the recommendations into short-term (1-3 years), mid-term (4-6 years), and long-term (7-10 years) goals. Most of the recommended actions for personal services including curriculum-based education programs are dependent on the hiring of new staff. Other action items can be implemented immediately, within existing funding and staffing levels.

Improve Arrival and Orientation Experience

Short-term

- Develop and use a new map of the park with related Foundation locations.
- Develop comprehensive wayfinding system including a directional sign plan for the park.
- Develop a parkwide bulletin board plan.
- Define types and areas of visitor access to Filene Center during performance and non-performance seasons.
- Develop and implement an advertising/marketing strategy for all interpretive programming.

Mid-term

- Install wayside exhibits flowing up from parking lot areas to the main gate.

Increase the Number and Variety of Interpretive Programs

Short-term

- Review and revise current interpretive programs to tell more of the park's stories in greater depth using the appropriate methods.
- Increase number of existing programs with existing staff and funding.

Mid-term

- Develop and offer new programs.
- Increase number of existing programs with more staff and funding.

Expand the Curriculum-based Education Program

Short-term

- Explore options for locations for dedicated classroom space.
- Establish relationship with Alice Ferguson Foundation and offer Bridging the Watershed programs along Wolf Trap Run and wooded area beyond Theatre-in-the Woods.
- Develop marketing strategy for education programs.
 - Create a one-page joint NPS/Wolf Trap Foundation brochure of programs.
 - Request Fairfax County Education Department send out info on programs.

Mid-term

- Establish a Teacher-Ranger-Teacher Program.

Long-term

- Hold workshops to create curriculum-based programs for different grades and programs.
 - Consider partnering with Colvin Run Elementary School to hold a curriculum development workshop.
- Conduct an education needs assessment.
- Establish an Education Coordinator position.

Establish a Visitor Contact Station

Short-term

- Convert Ranger Station into Contact Station.
- Develop an operations plan.
- Create temporary exhibits.

Mid-term

- Consider interactive exhibits.
- Identify audiovisual elements including an orientation film and digital media.

Long-term

- Consider a possible year-round sales area.

Increase Use of Interpretive Media

Wayside Exhibits

Mid-term

- Develop a wayside exhibit plan.
 - Fabricate and install wayside exhibits.

Digital Media

Short-term

- Produce a self-guided tour with small low-level markers on the route.
- Produce a Soundscape audio piece.
- Develop a series of audio-video casts that emphasize park stories.

Park Website

Short-term

- Make links to existing content.
- Create a chronological web-based slide show on “A Day in the Life of the Filene Center”.
- Create a web-based visual history of the park using historic images and aerial video and narration; start and end with finale of a performance.
- Post a virtual tour of the park on the park website.
- Develop webpages that provide more in-depth coverage.

Mid-term

- Create an online database of performances including audio, video, photos, and information for potential visitors.
- Collect oral histories of stagehands, key staff, performers, volunteers, and their experiences being at and/or performing at the park.
- Create an interactive webpage that allows visitors to “Set the Stage”.
- Record and post first hand stories of the performers told by the performers, then by patrons, and how that performance changed or inspired them.

Social Media

Short-term

- Create a park presence online via Facebook, possibly in cooperation with the already existing Wolf Trap Foundation page. Video, photos, and links could all be gathered here to reach out to a greater audience.

- Establish a blog by an artist in residence, current performers, or production staff that offers a daily or weekly description of Wolf Trap operations and performances/productions.

Interactive Exhibits

Short-term

- Compile a complete listing of all “signed” brass plaques with pictures and artifacts showing some of the 40 years of artists who have performed here on exhibit cases (walls) in Musician’s Lounge or around park.

Mid-term

- Install “free notes” in meadow.
- Develop, fabricate, and install models of Filene Centers 1 and 2 with specifications of each building.
- Develop a sculpture trail.
- Connect the “natural” forces of the park with the performing arts by featuring or highlighting the aspects of the park that make it unique through wooden acoustics and lawn seating.

Publications

- Develop a self-guided trail guide around grounds for recreation/exercise.
- Research, write, and produce publications.

Appendices



Appendix A: The Planning Team

National Park Service

Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

Katy Allen, Park Guide
 Emily Bullen, Park Guide
 Betsy Chittenden, Management Analyst
 Duane Erwin, Chief Ranger
 Joseph C. Fleig, Ranger Volunteer
 Kristin Freshwater, Archives Technician
 Phil Goetkin, Roads and Trails Supervisor
 John Gray, Production Chief
 Jewel Haskins, Chief of Interpretation and Education
 Stephen Hay, Facility Manager
 Amy Jonach, former Volunteer Coordinator
 Kenneth J. Lewis, Production Manager
 Audrey Lonsway, former Chief of Interpretation
 John C. McCarthy, Supply Maintenance
 Karen Pittleman, Director
 Will Rifenbark, Lead Park Guide
 Julia Russell, Archives Technician
 Mary Ellen Saville, Ranger Volunteer
 Sam Swersky, House Manager

Harpers Ferry Center

Toni Dufficy, Interpretive Planner (Team Captain)
 Theresa Eisenman, former National Capital Region Project Manager
 Jen Epstein, Education Specialist, National Mall and Memorial Parks
 Sue Hansen, Chief of Interpretation and Education, National Capital Region
 Maggie Zadorozny, Education Specialist, Rock Creek Park

Park Partners

Adelaide Chang, Hui Hula O Na Mele Aloha
 Katrina Fauss, Acting Program Director, Bridging the Watershed, Alice Ferguson Foundation
 Scott Fridy, Director of Performing Arts, Arts Council of Fairfax County
 Jo Hodgins, Director of Planning and Activities, Wolf Trap Foundation
 Rachel Jones, Assistant Director – Education Outreach, Wolf Trap Foundation
 Lee Anne Myslewski, Administrative Director, Wolf Trap Opera and Classical Program
 Roger Tomhave, Fairfax County Public Schools
 Jeanne Troy, former Director, Bridging the Watershed, Alice Ferguson Foundation
 Mimi Flaherty Willis, Education Senior Director, Wolf Trap Foundation

Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines

Every attempt will be made to provide full access to interpretive media and programs to ensure people with physical and mental disabilities have access to the same information necessary for safe and meaningful visits to national parks. This is in compliance with the National Park Service policy:

“...To provide the highest level of accessibility possible and feasible for persons with visual, hearing, mobility, and mental impairments, consistent with the obligation to conserve park resources and preserve the qualities of the park experience for everyone.” NPS Special Directive 83-3, Accessibility for Disabled Persons

All interpretation will follow general standards for accessibility as described in the Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media <http://www.nps.gov/hfc/pdf/accessibility/access-guide-aug2009.pdf>.

Appendix C: Interpretive Themes and Stories

Two different teams of park staff members worked to develop these themes and associated stories. One team met in May and one in August 2010. The 1997 General Management Plan and the 2005 draft Foundation Statement were used to guide the theme development process. Many of these stories were identified during a brainstorming exercise and were not fully developed by the participants.

Health of the Performing Arts

The health of the performing arts depends on an understanding of them and opportunities to experience them.

Possible Stories and Topics for Discussion:

- Live performances
- Accessible to all
- Shared oral traditions
- Cultural connections – global form of communication
- Duality of performing arts – effect on audience and performer
- Presenting the performing arts creates a live interaction between people and communities/cultures (artists/audience/culture – theater and ethnic)
- Great American performing arts forms – jazz, American musicals
- Preserving and transmitting cultures through the performing arts
- Greek tragedy
- Theater lingo
- Scale/scope
- Breaking down barriers between performers and audience/visitors

- Instrument petting zoo
- Audience engagement
- Actors are visitors too
- Audience/viewers as the performers – participation

People and the Performing Arts

The story of a performance starts well before show time and its effects can last long after the final bows.

Sub-theme: It takes more than just performers to make a performance at Wolf Trap – it takes production staff, stagehands, the audience, and many others. OR The characters in the story of the performing arts include the many performers throughout time, but also producers, stagehands, the audience, and many others.

Sub-theme: Around the globe, puppets in all their forms tell stories (puppet program)

Sub-theme: Actors experience a transformation through masks and makeup to become characters (masks and makeup program)

Sub-theme: A performer's skill is to communicate their feelings and emotions to an audience through movement and body language (stage motion program)

Sub-theme: Costuming is a creative process beginning with the designer and culminating with the actor (costume program)

Possible Stories and Topics for Discussion:

- Making the “backstage” aspects of performances transparent and accessible [through online video, tours, workshops] (theater size, sound, lighting, etc.)
- The differences between Filene Center 1 and 2, and the story of the rebuilding process
- The stories of the people involved backstage – NPS, crew, visiting crew, and artistic
- Highlight all spaces/sheds and how we compare to others
- Theater lingo
- Performing arts at WOTR calls on many different professionals
 - Backstage communications and cueing
 - Visiting staff and local crew
 - Kinesiology as it relates to performance
 - Roles of production staff and leaders and performers
 - Music, theater, and dance
 - Props
 - Makeup and costumes
 - Scenic design and technical theater
 - Lighting

- Audio
- The Hidden Art
- Special effects
- Stage dimensions
- Size (a la Met Opera) rigging
- Height
- Scale
- Infrastructure
- Dressing rooms – size (Bolshoi)
- Technical demands – sound and theater design
- Communication
 - International performers and interpreters
- Air casters for orchestra shell
- Dance floor suspended
- Compare to “sheds” other venues
- Location of multiple stages and facility
- Usage limitations
- Meadow pavilion and sound amplification
- Technical capabilities of FC II
- New technology, LED, digital mixers
- Upkeep of stage/building
- Open NSO rehearsals – what leads up to a real performance
- Story of stage hands
- Experience of performers at WOTR

History

By providing the land to make the park and the funds to build a performance venue to the National Park Service, Catherine Filene Shouse gave a gift to the American people, ensuring her vision and legacy live on.

Sub-theme: Wolf Trap presents and preserves the historical legacy of the performing arts.

Sub-theme: Wolf Trap represents Mrs. Shouse’s mid-late 20th century philanthropic ideals.

Possible Stories and Topics for Discussion:

- Production efforts
- Great moments/out takes

- Backstage tours
- Local schools – autumn/spring performance opportunities?
- A day in the life of the Filene Center
- Co-operative events – Wolf Trap and local organizations
- Learning from the past
- Purpose has changed
- Perseverance
- Origins of WOTR
- History of the place/land
- Filene Center 1 & 2 – rebuild; growth; community
- Building a place for significant things to happen in the future
- History of performing arts at WOTR and the park’s founding
- Mrs. Shouse –founding the park – and her vision for the park
- The story and value of the fire – the park before and after

Location

Exploring the location of Wolf Trap reveals a natural area protected by the National Park Service, a glimpse into a former Virginia farm, and provides perspective on urban development in the greater National Capital area.

Sub-theme: Wolf Trap is a natural space for visitor experiences.

Sub-theme: Wolf Trap showcases high energy performances and low energy impacts on resources.

Sub-theme: The sounds of nature are important forms of communication that we should be aware of (Sounds program)

Possible Stories and Topics for Discussion:

- Connecting visitors through nature to the performing arts
- Music of/in nature
- Intimacy of the venue
- Natural lighting
- Natural backdrop as part of the performance
- Neighborhood park
- Immersion in nature
- Recreation
- Low impact design

- Wading in the creek in past versus now
- Environmental quality
- Nature in music – plants
- Recreation – picnic
- Journey over river through woods to TITW
- Nature’s music – birds, etc
- Soundscape
- Get outside/active
- Soothing, comforting
- Coming together of the music and natural environment
- Benefits of landscape on the venue
- Weather (Renee Fleming/Howie Day) moonrise
- Watch the stars on stage with the stars in the heavens
- NPS protecting greenspace in park/ benefits to community and watershed and ecosystem
- Performance works inspired by nature and other parks (face...)
- Whole experience – picnicking outdoors with performance
- Crowd management/environmental protection
- Invasive versus native plants
- Sustainability
- Climate friendly park





Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts

1551 Trap Road
Vienna, VA 22182
703-255-1800

www.nps.gov/wotr

